

Appl. No. 09/992,240
Amdt dated July 20, 2004
Reply to Office Action of April 22, 2004

Remarks

The present amendment responds to the Official Action dated April 22, 2004. The Official Action rejected claims 1-10, 13-20 and 24 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) based on Kim U.S. Patent No. 6,546,002 ("Kim"). The Official Action rejected claims 11, 12 and 21-23 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as unpatentable over Kim in view of Stern U.S. Patent Application No. 2002/0174035 ("Stern"). These grounds of rejection are addressed below following a brief discussion of the present invention to provide context. Claims 1, 2, 4-8, 10-12, 15-17, 19, 21, 23 and 24 have been amended to be more clear and distinct. Claims 1-24 are presently pending.

The Present Invention

A system according to an aspect of the present invention comprises a plurality of terminals, each associated with a providing consumer who can upload information to a centralized data store. The information may be classified into one of a plurality of predefined channels. A channel designates an area of interest to a consumer useful in guiding consumer decisions, such as purchases, relating to products, services and suppliers. For example, a "reliability" channel may be provided, with a providing consumer being able to enter information relating to reliability of a product and with the information being classified into the "reliability channel."

The system also suitably provides a plurality of terminals, each associated with a requesting consumer who is able to request consumer information. Each requesting consumer is preferably associated with a profile that provides information about the consumer, for example,

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the interests of the consumer. The consumer profile for a requesting consumer suitably specifies the channels of interest to the consumer. A requesting consumer is able to request information, for example, information relating to a particular product, service or supplier. Once the requesting consumer makes a request, the consumer profile is suitably retrieved and examined to identify the channels of interest to the consumer. The data store is searched for information responsive to the request, and items of information matching the channels that are identified in the requesting consumer's profile as being of interest are provided to the requesting consumer, for example, by downloading the items of information the requesting consumer's terminal.

The Art Rejections

All of the art rejections hinge on the application of Kim standing alone or Kim and Stern in combination. As addressed in greater detail below, Kim and Stern do not support the Official Action's reading of them and the rejections based thereupon should be reconsidered and withdrawn. Further, the Applicant does not acquiesce in the analysis of Kim and Stern made by the Official Action and respectfully traverses the Official Action's analysis underlying its rejections.

The Official Action rejected claims 1-10, 13-20 and 24 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as anticipated by Kim. In light of the present amendments to claims 1, 7, 8, 10, 15-17, 19 and 24, this ground of rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1, as amended, claims receiving information entered into a terminal by a providing consumer about a product, service or supplier and uploading that information to the data store. Claim 1 further claims classifying the entered information into one of a number of predefined

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channels, each channel designating a category for information that can be provided by providing consumers and useful for guiding consumer decisions relating to products, services and suppliers to which the information relates, each channel identifying a particular consumer area of interest about a product, service or supplier. Claim 1 further claims storing a profile of a requesting consumer that identifies the channels associated with the requesting consumer. Claim 1 additionally claims receiving a request for information about a product, service or supplier entered into a terminal by a requesting consumer and in response to the request, downloading information to the requesting consumer if that information relates to the product, service or supplier and was classified into any of the channels defined by the requesting consumer's profile. Kim does not teach these features in the combination presently claimed.

Kim teaches a system for making information and applications available to a user by means of a mobile interface agent (MIA). The MIA stores user profile information for a user in order to maintain and update a user profile. The user profile allows adaptation of the performance of the system to a user. For example, the profile may include stored uniform resource locator (URL) bookmarks. The profile may specify display configuration information specifying the appearance of the interface to the user, or may specify configuration of applications accessible to the user, such as the appearance of spreadsheet or word processor applications.

The MIA of Kim is used to send commands and requests and to receive services and gain access to applications, and the operation of the MIA and the appearance of the network of Kim to the user are influenced by selections and other information stored in a user profile. However,

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Kim does not teach that information uploaded from a providing user is classified into channels designating categories for information useful for guiding consumer decisions relating to products, services or suppliers to which the information relates, with each channel identifying a particular consumer area of interest about a product, service or supplier. The classifying of information into such channels allows for a transfer of information to a repository from which it may be requested by consumers, with a requesting consumer being able to designate his or her areas of interest and receive only information identified with those areas of interest. Information can be received from many consumers and can cover many different areas of consumer interest.

However, the classification of information into channels and downloading only information that is classified into a channel designated in a user's profile allows for a user to retrieve from a large body of information only that information that is of interest to the consumer. The storage of channel information in a user's profile provides a user with a simple way to obtain only desired information without having to make a specific designation of areas of interest each time a request for information is made. A providing user can be allowed to provide information without excessive restriction of the categories of information that can be provided, but the identification of channels of interest of a requesting user prevents the requesting user from being overwhelmed with extraneous information.

The MIA of Kim employs a user profile, but does not teach that the user profile designates channels identifying areas of interest to a consumer or the classification of information into channels identifying areas of interest to a consumer, as is claimed by claim 1. Claim 1, as amended, therefore defines over the cited art and should be allowed.

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Claim 7, as amended, claims receiving a request from a requesting consumer, recalling a stored profile that identifies channels corresponding to consumer areas of interest associated with a requesting consumer, each channel designating a category for information that can be provided by providing consumers and useful for guiding consumer decisions relating to products, services and suppliers to which the information relates, retrieving from the data store classified information about the product, service or supplier uploaded by a providing consumer to the data store and downloading the classified information to the requesting consumer if that information relates to the product, service or supplier and was classified into any of the channels associated with areas of interest of the requesting consumer. As noted above with respect to claim 1, Kim does not disclose classifying information into channels where each channel designates a category for information that can be provided by providing consumers and useful for guiding consumer decisions relating to products, services and suppliers to which the information relates and providing requested information to a requesting consumer if the information is classified into a channel associated with areas of interest of the requesting consumer. Claim 7, as amended, therefore defines over the cited art and should be allowed.

Claim 8, as amended, claims receiving information about a product, service or supplier entered into a terminal by a providing consumer and classifying the information into channels in accordance with predefined consumer areas of interest to a requesting consumer, each channel designating a category for information that can be provided by providing consumers and useful for guiding consumer decisions relating to products, services and suppliers to which the information relates. As noted above with respect to claim 1, Kim does not teach Kim does not

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disclose classifying information into channels where each channel designates a category for information that can be provided by providing consumers and useful for guiding consumer decisions relating to products, services and suppliers to which the information relates. Claim 8, as amended, therefore defines over the cited art and should be allowed.

Claim 10, as amended, claims storing uploaded information classified into channels, each channel relating to a particular consumer area of interest, each channel designating a category for information that can be provided by providing consumers and useful for guiding consumer decisions relating to products, services and suppliers to which the information relates. Claim 10 further claims, in response to a request for information, identifying a requesting consumer and recalling a profile that identifies the channels corresponding to areas of interest associated with the requesting consumer and downloading the classified information to the requesting consumer if that information relates to the product, service or supplier and was classified into any of the channels defined by the profile. As noted above with respect to claim 1, Kim does not teach classifying information into channels where each channel designates a category for information that can be provided by providing consumers and useful for guiding consumer decisions relating to products, services and suppliers to which the information relates and providing requested information to a requesting consumer if the information is classified into a channel associated with areas of interest of the requesting consumer. Claim 10, as amended, therefore defines over the cited art and should be allowed.

Claim 15, as amended, claims means for classifying entered information into one of a plurality of predefined channels, each channel relating to a particular consumer area of interest,

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each channel designating a category for information that can be provided by providing consumers and useful for guiding consumer decisions relating to selection of products, services and suppliers to which the information relates. Claim 15 further claims means responsive to a request by a requesting consumer to recognize the requesting consumer and to recall a profile that identifies the channels corresponding to consumer ~~issues of interest to~~ areas of interest of the requesting consumer, as well as a filter responsive to the requesting consumer's profile, the filter being set to permit download of information to the requesting consumer only if that information relates to the product, service or supplier and was classified into any of the channels defined by the requesting consumer's profile. As noted above with respect to claim 1, Kim does not teach classifying information into channels where each channel designates a category for information that can be provided by providing consumers and useful for guiding consumer decisions relating to products, services and suppliers to which the information relates and providing requested information to a requesting consumer if the information is classified into a channel associated with areas of interest of the requesting consumer. Claim 10, as amended, therefore defines over the cited art and should be allowed.

Claim 16, as amended, claims means responsive to a request by a requesting consumer to recognize the requesting consumer and to retrieve from a data store classified information about the product, service or supplier uploaded by a providing consumer to the data store and a filter responsive to a stored profile that identifies channels corresponding to consumer areas of interest to the requesting consumer, each channel designating a category for information that can be provided by providing consumers and useful for guiding consumer decisions relating to products,

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services and suppliers to which the information relates, the filter being set to permit download of information to the requesting consumer if that information relates to the product, service or supplier and was classified into any of the channels defined by the requesting consumer's profile. As noted above with respect to claim 1, Kim does not teach classifying information into channels where each channel designates a category for information that can be provided by providing consumers and useful for guiding consumer decisions relating to products, services and suppliers to which the information relates and providing requested information to a requesting consumer if the information is classified into a channel associated with areas of interest of the requesting consumer. Claim 16, as amended, therefore defines over the cited art and should be allowed.

Claim 17, as amended, claims means for classifying information into one of a plurality of predefined channels, each channel identifying an area of potential area to a requesting consumer, each channel designating a category for information that can be provided by providing consumers and useful for guiding consumer decisions relating to products, services and suppliers to which the information relates. As noted above with respect to claim 1, Kim does not teach this limitation. Claim 17, as amended, therefore defines over Kim and should be allowed.

Claim 19, as amended, claims a data store for storing uploaded information, the stored information being classified into channels, each channel relating to a particular consumer ~~issue~~ area of interest, each channel designating a category for information that can be provided by providing consumers and consumer decisions relating to products, services and suppliers to which the information. Claim 19 further claims means responsive to a request for information to recognize the requesting consumer and to recall a profile that identifies the channels

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corresponding to consumer issues of interest to the requesting consumer, as well as a filter responsive to the requesting consumer's profile, the filter being set to permit download of information to the requesting consumer if that information relates to the product, service or supplier and was classified into any of the channels defined by the requesting consumer's profile. As noted above with respect to claim 1, Kim does not teach classifying information into channels where each channel designates a category for information that can be provided by providing consumers and useful for guiding consumer decisions relating to products, services and suppliers to which the information relates and providing requested information to a requesting consumer if the information is classified into a channel associated with areas of interest of the requesting consumer.

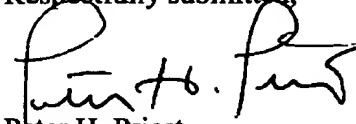
Claim 24, as amended, claims means for classifying information into one of a plurality of predefined channels, each channel identifying an area of potential area to a requesting consumer, each channel designating a category for information that can be provided by providing consumers and useful for guiding consumer decisions relating to products, services and suppliers to which the information relates. As noted above with respect to claim 1, claim 24 does not teach this feature. Claim 24, as amended, therefore defines over the cited art and should be allowed.

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Conclusion

All of the presently pending claims, as amended, appearing to define over the applied references, withdrawal of the present rejection and prompt allowance are requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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